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ABSTRACT

In order for adult education to be successfully applied in other countries, it is important that an understanding of the people's traditional background and educational attitudes is acquired. A continuing educator must also be a continuing learner. In Africa, education is considered a continuing or recurrent process throughout life serving to fulfill social needs, to foster community awareness, and transmit basic values. Adult education offers a chance for a country to develop and strengthen its population, not only in terms of economic advancement, but in terms of acquiring literacy and skills in the areas of politics, health, agriculture, and economics. Educational problems exist for African women since men are usually provided more educational opportunities in the school system which is patterned after the western model. In planning adult education programs, the important role women already h ve in the areas of agriculture and trade should be taken into consideration. Adult education, for men and for women, promotes national and cultural cohesion by raising the consciousness of the people to a sense of development and change. (EC)

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"A RUSTY PERSON IS WORSE THAN RUSTY IRON" – ADULT EDUCATION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICA

LALAGE BOWN

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A PUBLICATION IN CONTINUING EDUCATION
SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

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"A RUSTY PERSON IS WORSE THAN RUSTY IRON" – ADULT EDUCATION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICA

LALAGE BOWN

Address delivered by Lalage Bown, Professor of Adult Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria, upon being awarded the William Pearson Tolley Medal for Distinguished Leadership in Adult Education.

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY
May 23, 1975

CITATION ACCOMPANYING THE WILLIAM PEARSON TOLLEY MEDAL FOR DISTINGUISHED LEADERSHIP IN ADULT EDUCATION

LALAGE BOWN, internationally distinguished professor, we honor you for your pioneering role in adult education. Your enthusiasm and concern for humanity transcend spatial and racial bounds.

It took no "Movement" to convince you that a woman's place is where a woman wants her place to be. You learned independence at your mother's knee, and the lesson was learned well.

Your influence on adult education in Africa has been singular; your contribution to the professionalism of adult education in the world, substantial.

You have organized and helped to devise professional adult education programs in independent black Africa, and you were the first secretary of the African Adult Education Association.

You were one of the pioneer staff of the University College of the Gold Coast, now the University of Ghana. You were associated with development of the Awudome Residential Adult College, the first such institution in Africa. You were a pioneer extramural staff member of what is now Makerere University, and you are now the first professor of adult education and chief extension coordinator of Ahmadu Bello University, the largest in tropical Africa. Tonight we add another "first" to a lifetime of firsts for you as you become the first woman recipient of this extraordinary award.

It is a distinct honor for Syracuse University to bestow on you the William Pearson Tolley Medal for Distinguished Leadership in Adult Education.

ALEXANDER N. CHARTERS	MELVIN A. EGGERS	MELVIN C. HOLM
		CHAIRMAN
PROFESSOR OF ADULT EDUCATION	CHANCELLOR	BOARD OF TRUSTEES

FOREWORD

Professor Lalage Bown, through her pioneer work in adult education in the developing nations of Africa, rightfully deserves to join the notable list of scholars and leaders who have received the William P. Tolley Medal for Distinguished Leadership in Adult Education. The presentation, made at an Awards Dinner on the S.U. campus, was designed to coincide with two international activities related to adult education.

The School of Education at Syracuse University sponsored for two days immediately preceding the Award Ceremony, an International Seminar on Information Resources for Educators of Adults. Representatives from several countries and international organizations attended the Seminar, designed to identify the elements that are components of an adult education resource model. Syracuse University is grateful that the participants were able to remain in Syracuse to honor Dr. Bown by their presence at the ceremony.

For several days following the Medal presentation, a number of events were held in Ottawa and Toronto focused around the annual meeting of the International Council for Adult Education. Dr. Bown and the international participants in the Syracuse events traveled "across the border" to join their colleagues in Canada.

Syracuse University was honored also by the presence at the Award dinner of three previous recipients of the Tolley Medal. They were Dr. Cyril O. Houle, Dr. Kenneth G. Bartlett, and Dr. J. Roby Kidd. The Dinner is always made even more stimulating by the presence of Professors and Academic Deans with keen interest in the academic life of the University as related to adult education. This year the graduate students in the Adult Education Area at Syracuse University were especially welcomed and recognized.

It was also a pleasure to note that the Award Dinner was the first event presided over by the recently elected Chairman of the Board of Syracuse University, Mr. Melvin Holm, who had been a student at University College. Chancellor of the University, Melvin A. Eggers, read the Citation and presented the Medal.

The then Chancellor William Pearson Tolley endowed the medal in 1966 to recognize adult educators of national and international reputation. His presence at each of the Award Dinners is another reflection of his continuing interest in and commitment to the adult education field.

ALEXANDER N. CHARTERS
PROFESSOR OF ADULT EDUCATION
SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

"A RUSTY PERSON IS WORSE THAN RUSTY IRON" – ADULT EDUCATION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICA.

I

PARTNERSHIP, EDUCATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL

It's a wry old educational joke that when a student does well the teacher claims the credit; and when a student does badly the teacher blames the student. But any educational enterprise, certainly any involving adults, seems to me a partnership between the teacher and the learner (even students by correspondence or teaching machine or by listening to the radio have a distant partner in the person who wrote the course, devised the machine, or sat at the microphone – and all those distant teachers have partners in the students who take up and make creative use of their materials). Any achievement or any failure in our profession doesn't belong to an individual; it belongs to teachers and learners in combination.

I have made this statement to explain my reaction to the honor of this award. Upon hearing that I was to be offered the William Pearson Tolley Medal, one of our profession's most special distinctions, I was at first incredulous, then overwhelmed at being linked with such eminent scholars as the previous recipients of the medal, then humble at the thought of being the first woman adult educator to have been singled out. Finally I came to pride, since if the award is presented to me, any achievement it signalizes belongs in reality to my students and my teachers – to the many adult students with whom I have worked in various countries over a quarter of a century and to the mentors and colleagues who in turn worked with me so that I might be better equipped for the profession. I take this medal as a tribute to them all.

Before saying more about my co-workers, let me turn to the medal itself and its significance.

To all of us it is a symbol of the many pioneering efforts made in the field of university adult education by Syracuse University: in the development of outreach programs, the accumulation and exchange of information, the promotion of imaginative adult educational research, and the fostering of professional organizations. The progenitor of all this accomplishment is the man for whom the medal is named, Chancellor Emeritus William Pearson Tolley, a living example of the catalytic effect an enlightened university head can produce when prepared to back wholeheartedly the cause of adult learning with a vision of the university's role in it. One of the earlier recipients of the medal, Dr. Mohan Mehta of the University of Rajasthan, is another example of the same phenomenon. In the institutions where I have had

responsibility for extension, I have been personally fortunate in encountering similar persons at the helm: Dr. Douglas Anglin and Dr. Lameck Goma, successive Vice Chancellors of the University of Zambia; and Dr. Ishaya Audu, Vice Chancellor of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria, where I now work. University extension work depends very much on positive support given by individuals such as Tolley and the others I have cited in positions of academic leadership. It also depends, of course, on able executants, sympathetic to the currents of society at large; and here at Syracuse the University has had them – the first exemplar was Professor Emeritus Kenneth Gill Bartlett, another earlier beneficiary of the Tolley Medal.

I have said that to all adult educators the medal symbolizes the work of Syracuse University, under Dr. Tolley and his successors, in pioneering various adult education services. To those of us who come from outside the United States, it must also symbolize the special interests of the University in international affairs. To take one example outside adult education, Syracuse had a pioneer Center of African Studies, with an emphasis on East Africa, and no one need ever have felt surprise to hear Swahili spoken on the campus; while adult educationists here have played a leading part in various international activities.

Syracuse was the seeding ground of the International Congress of University Adult Education; and the nurturing of the Congress owes a great deal to the energy, interest, and vision of Professor Alexander Charters (working together with his friend Professor Bill McCallion of McMaster University). Alex Charters is so well-known in the USA and Canada that his fellow North Americans may not appreciate all that he has given to international adult education, inspiring and organizing (together with the late Sandy Liveright) the first international meeting on comparative studies and taking a frontline role in various UNESCO projects. I shall always remember him particularly as an interested participant in various international meetings of adult educators leading eventually to foundation of the African Adult Education Association, now a flourishing body with UNESCO recognition.

The Tolley Medal is in itself a manifestation of the strength and complexity of international links in our profession and of the fact that the world of learning knows no boundaries. The medal was presented last to Roby Kidd, a friend and guide to many of us from diverse countries and cultures, whose Canadian nationality takes second place to his role as the founder-editor of *Convergence* and as the prime mover of the International Council for Adult Education. It had previously been awarded to two Americans, an Indian and an Englishman; and I am sure that it has been offered to me, not in my capacity as a native of Great Britain, but rather as a worker in Africa for a number of years (in fact, when one has to fill in

nationality on immigration forms, I'm very often tempted now-a-days to write in Pan-African!).

The medal, then, must be treasured as a sign of the best in university adult education and of kinship across nations in all adult educational work. I will certainly cherish it with humility and gratitude. The humility is mine, but, as I said earlier, the gratitude is also on behalf of my mentors and students, who deserve any honor that is to be claimed, and with whom I share this award.

First of all, I share it with my mother, since any education I have I owe to her firm belief that daughters and sons should be educated equally.

Secondly, I share it with my teachers at Oxford and the colleagues from whom I have learned throughout my working life. At Oxford, even as an undergraduate I was introduced to standards of scholarship yielding an ideal of what a university is and to an open approach to ideas and cultures which encouraged an interest and excitement in how other societies work. At my own college, Somerville (proud employer of the only British woman Nobel prize-winner), I met some of the outstanding women scholars in Britain at the time, whose examples afforded strong confidence in what women could achieve.

In my postgraduate training at what was then the Oxford Extra-Mural Delegacy, I was under the guidance of Thomas Hodgkin[1], philosopher, adult educator, and later Africanist, and from him and his staff I learned the social awareness firmly embedded in the Oxford tradition of adult education. Its first precept was that adult education must be related to social ends appropriate at different times and places; and its second that adult education is ideally concerned with social justice – with the provision to all, including the most underprivileged, of equal opportunities for realizing their potential. I'm proud of that tradition and believe that those precepts were useful armament for working in developing countries. Such a starting-point prevented the blind transfer of institutions, but provided a principled approach to problems.

If a continuing educator is to have any credibility, he or she must also be a continuing learner. One's ideas are constantly being reshaped and modified by discussion and interaction with co-workers and friends. I hope it won't be invidious to pick out a few by name, and to refer to the sense of gain I have from David Kimble's insistence on efficient organization, Soas Jones-Quartey's concern for every individual student, however humble, Cherry Gertzel's sensibility to the currents of politics, Ieuan Hughes's open-minded curiosity about other societies, Ayo Ogunsheye's dedication to the African cultural renaissance, and Akande Tugbiyele's steady persistence in stirring up Nigerian public conscience about adult education (some of these names may not be so familiar outside Africa, but that is

the more reason for me to celebrate them here)[2]. These are people with whom I have worked in the same departments. Inspiration and encouragement have also come from fellow-professionals in the African Adult Education Association; and adult educators from outside Africa have taught me much, in discussion, friendly advice, and stimulating writings. Among them are Paul Bertelsen of the UNESCO Adult Education Section as well as Sydney Raybould and Cy Houle, two other beneficiaries of the Tolley Medal.

Close personal friends in other disciplines and with other interests help one immeasurably to clarify one's thought, and I would be dishonest and ungrateful if I didn't mention how much I have learned over the years from Adebayo Adedeji, soon to be Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa; Denis Austin, a former co-worker in Ghana and now Professor of the Government of New States at the University of Manchester; Kwesi Brew, Ghanaian poet and diplomat; Michael Crowder, at present Director of the Centre for Nigerian Cultural Studies at my own University in Northern Nigeria; and Polly Hill, Smuts Reader in Anthropology at the University of Cambridge. As is splendidly stated in Ecclesiasticus: "A faithful friend is the medicine of life."

Naming even a handful of one's preceptors threatens to introduce a catalogue. I dare not start at all on names in mentioning the third group of sharers of this medal – my many students in Africa and elsewhere. They include those in villages, towns, and cities in East Africa, Ghana, Nigeria, and Zambia with whom I have sat in extramural classes and courses to discuss the problems of their own countries; those men and women in various professions (ranging from diplomacy to town planning, from community health to soldiering) for whom I have helped to program continuing education courses; persons in other parts of the world to whom I have tried to teach about Africa (including members of the U.S. Army and aspirants to the U.S. Peace Corps); and a lesser number in Nigeria, Zambia, and Britain to whom I've taught about adult education itself. Naming no names, let me mention episodes relating to one or two of these students.

There was the Ghanaian girl reporter who attended a class I conducted to introduce young educated women to such skills as running a meeting and taking active part in unions and similar bodies. This was in colonial times, and one week she didn't turn up; she had been jailed for an article judged seditious. But in her place came a tough-looking but bewildered middle-aged woman warder, who explained: "I was forced to come by my prisoner, who said she didn't want to miss the class." I'm sure you will understand when I say that I value that girl's attitude as much as any medal and I also value the memory that the prison warder stayed on to become a regular class member herself.

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Then there was the shop assistant who was honorary secretary to my class on *Problems of Self-Government*. He was stirred to enter politics, and fifteen years later I stepped off an airplane in another part of Africa, straight into his affectionate embrace (neither of us knew the other would be there) – he was now his country's ambassador. And there is the man whom I once taught for a short period when he was an obscure student in London; he is now his country's Vice-President, and when we meet he still greets me jokingly as "My teacher." I give these examples not out of bedazzlement with high places, but to illustrate the potential of some of the students I have had the good fortune to work with, and how much I could learn from them.

With such students, life was *enjoyable* as well as instructive. Adult teaching has always been in my experience an enormously pleasurable occupation; and in honoring the students I have worked with, I honor not only their achievements but also the gusto and comradeship they brought to learning. I hope it won't sound frivolous to say that, while I remember our complex discussions in class, I also remember the beer we drank afterwards. The shine on the Tolley Medal is, for me, the shine of enjoyment which patinates adult education work, certainly as I have had the luck to experience it in Africa.

II

THE ROOTS OF AFRICAN ADULT EDUCATION

Let me now move from reminiscence about African adult education to some discussion of its evolution, problems, and prospects. Much of the discussion may well apply to other parts of the Third World, but I am only claiming to touch upon Africa, because that is the continent with which I am most familiar.

I want to pick out three themes and talk briefly about each. The *first* is the traditional background to African adult education, because very little is known about this subject outside Africa; the *second* is the relationship of adult education to development, with which I have been closely concerned in Nigeria recently; the *third* is the question of women's education, because although it is a field in which I have little specialist knowledge, it is obviously appropriate to this occasion and to International Women's Year.

* * * * * *

We'll start with the traditional background.

One of the common dilemmas of the so-called "developing world" is that we are

still subjected to consultants and experts from Europe and North America who, with the greatest goodwill, try to apply almost unchanged the educational prescriptions which have evolved in their own societies. My heart always sinks when I hear such a visitor say: "In *my* country, we do such-and-such." It is very rare to meet one who says: "What has been found to work in *your* country?" All too often, in the projects started by such good people without regard to the cultural setting, the dollars melt away like water into sand and the experts themselves go away frustrated or defeated. Moreover, the result of European colonization and of the subsequent advice of international experts from Western societies has been that many senior African policy-makers and educators themselves hold similar assumptions. They may criticize foreign educational content, but do not criticize the structure or methodology of imported Western systems of education, whether of formal schooling or of adult and continuing education.

Adult educational projects are most unlikely to succeed unless their initiators take into account the history and continuing traditions of the country concerned. At the first Tolley Medal presentation, Cy Houle enlarged on an episode in the history of adult education in New England,[3] which pointed up the rich tradition there is, even in a relatively new society like that of the United States. As you may imagine, the much older societies in many parts of Africa have also had a long tradition. Some elements have decayed away, some were affected by alien importations, but some are lively and still operative.

Lest I be misunderstood, let me say here that I am not standing for any kind of educational chauvinism. We *must* all learn from each other and try out one another's ideas and methods; knowledge should no more be inhibited by political boundaries than are the wind or the rain. But when we do seek to borrow from (or lend to) other cultures, we must do so while mindful of the soil in which we are attempting to make new implantations – the soil of indigenous tradition.

What is that soil, what is the inheritance of African adult education? Prof. Asavia Wandira of Makerere University has pointed out that indigenous forms of learning were not compartmentalized;[4] many African societies depended on a tacit acceptance of the idea of continuous education, or sometimes of recurrent education. One can glean the assumptions of various peoples about knowledge and learning from their oral literature. Many folk tales have the fundamental moral that "Wisdom is better than strength";[5] others point to the view that no one human being can grasp all wisdom (there is, for instance, a fable in one part of Northern Nigeria called "How sense was distributed"[6] and a well-known one from Uganda about a man who tried to put all wisdom into a pot);[7] yet others stress the need for even an older person to be alert and to keep on learning. There isn't time to recount any of the stories in full, but a few proverbs may give the flavor of some inherited views on learning in one or two African societies:

i. The best messengers are those with intelligence, not those with the longest legs (Akan, Ghana);

ii. The bow that a boy used to kill a vulture was bent by an old man (Ibo, Nigeria);

iii. Wisdom is like a baobab tree, one man's arms can never go round it (Ewe, Ghana);

iv. A man who asks questions never loses his way (Ibo, Nigeria);

v. A rusty person is worse than rusty iron (Akan, Ghana);

vi. Not even God is ripe enough (Yoruba, Nigeria).[8]

Jan Vansina, in his now classic book an oral tradition, comments that such proverbs are vitally useful in disclosing the norms of a people;[9] and those quoted are a few guideposts to normally accepted views in various societies about knowledge, wisdom, and learning.

Besides such scattered indications in oral literature, coherent ideologies are at work in many places. That of Islam has prevailed in parts of Africa for nearly a thousand years (incidentally the oldest African universities are Islamic: the Al Quarawiyin University at Fez, founded in 859 A.D.; and Al Azhar in Cairo, founded in 970 A.D.). Islam is a religion of a Book, the Holy Koran, and a religion with ordered ethical and legal codes. This has meant a need for the transmission of accurate moral and legal authority. It involves systematic "chains of authority" validated by written and carefully preserved licenses to teach,[10] and thus the accumulation of a weighty body of scholarship, whose very size has resulted in the acceptance of the idea that learning knows no age-limit. It has also resulted in a respect for "the greatness of learning." The Prophet Mohammed prescribed the pursuit of knowledge "from the cradle to the grave," and said: "You must seek after knowledge even if you have to travel for it as far as China" (about the same as saying in modern times: as far as the moon). In the Muslim world there is a whole network of traveling teachers and also of traveling "seekers-after-knowledge," who may be of any mature age.

From *fundamental ideas about life-long learning*, let us move to *specific social needs* adult education in pre-colonial Africa was designed to fulfill. The main needs might be described as:

To hold the community together;

To preserve its values and culture;

To ensure the transmission of the common stock of knowledge;

To train leaders;

To promote the acquisition of skills economically useful to society (some of these might be open to all, such as farming; while others, such as medicine or metal-working, would be more esoteric and could only be learned by members of a special association or guild).

It seems worth categorizing and spelling out these goals, since some may still apply while others may be superseded by the needs of development in the 1970's.

By what means and through what institutions were those types of learning brought about? Clearly, one institution or means could serve several purposes, but for simplicity I should like to look at each in relation to one major purpose only.

First, what about the *fostering of community awareness?* This was always done by the most public means possible – by official history and by literature emphasizing loyalty to the group. Praise-songs, court histories, masquerade and drama, and public story-telling were all used to build the community and articulate official customs and attitudes. Some peoples, such as the Bemba of Zambia, have special public gathering places at which such events may take place. Two more formalized examples may be given from Nigeria: in the ancient kingdom of Benin every year there is a week-long festival which includes each day an enactment of a ritual relating to the past of the kingdom, a reminder to all the people of its foundations and an occasion to renew loyalty; and in the Niger Delta, among the Ijaw, an occasional performance extends over many days of a dramatic cycle including their major myths – Europeans may draw a parallel perhaps with Oberammergau.[11]

The *consolidation and transmission of basic values* is very often a highly institutionalized process. Many societies have complicated rituals at puberty designed to prepare young people for adult roles and community responsibilities: the rituals emphasizing sex roles, family relationships, and social behavior. Such routines of instruction are still valued, even in an industrial urban community such as the Zambian Copperbelt, where parents whose adolescent children are in Western-type schools send them during the holidays for this traditional instruction. Some societies have more than one level of ritual organized through what anthropologists call age-grades. Among the Nupe of North Western Nigeria a common arrangement is division into three levels: a children's grade (age roughly 12-15), a second grade

(age 15-20), and a senior grade (age 20-30). Each age-grade instills part of a code of conduct valid for life – comradeship, mutual work-assistance, and respect for superiors.[12]

If values may be reinforced and passed on by relatively formal methods, a good deal of knowledge (outside the Islamic system) is passed on in very informal ways. It may be picked up at public gathering-places such as those already mentioned, or at markets, which incidentally may be highly significant in providing practical economic understanding; or it may be conveyed by story-telling or public speeches. Some people, moreover, have for many centuries been the traditional conveyors of new knowledge (and ideas) from place to place. Africa since before medieval times has been criss-crossed by long-distance trade routes, and the merchants who passed along them brought information and ideology as well as goods. Some in the Western Sudan carried books and were even accompanied by traveling teachers.

All the types of learning so far mentioned are more or less *generalized* (though women may have less opportunity to benefit from them than men). What about *specialized education*, for socio-political roles, or economic skills?

Most African societies depend on responsible leadership and have mechanisms for *leadership training*. A people such as the Masai in East Africa carries on the age-grade system up to the rank of elder; and at that stage, when a man is 40 or so, he is given the lore and instruction judged suitable to a leader (the Masai might thus be regarded as having a system of recurrent education for social role).[13] In other cases, the end of membership in age-grade societies may be followed by joining a special cult; and there may also be cults or "secret societies" where there are no age-grades. In such organizations, men of substance and position are brought together and learn concepts and skills believed to be of use in controlling the community. In monarchial systems, rulers at accession often receive secret counsel from priests and king-makers, and once on the throne are guided by advisors and sometimes advisory councils and may be subjected to the negative admonition of a court jester.

When we turn to *skill-training*, skills such as farming, domestic arts, and soldiering had to be widely acquired, while others were confined to a small cadre. Many African peoples have inherited from the past a substantial corpus of agricultural knowledge and techniques and have also been able to absorb various innovations (the cultivation of new crops, for example, such as cocoa in Ivory Coast and Ghana). This has been made possible by institutions of group or community work which result in a general acquisition of skills. Agricultural tasks are often performed collectively, by a family or village group, or an age-grade; in all such groups the older and more expert will teach the younger and less expert; they will supervise,

advise, and criticize. At the same time the novices will learn simply from example. The same point applies to women learning domestic arts.

A few polities, particularly in Southern Africa, depended on martial rather than peaceful skills, and had a nation-wide regimental organization whereby all young men learned about fighting. Regiments were organized among, for instance, the Ngoni, on an age basis, and would include aristocrats, serfs, captives; led by an outstanding officer (or *induna*), they were sent on a first expedition as soon as they were mustered, to gain an insight into the problems of war, and thereafter they were trained and drilled regularly.[14]

Crafts and professions were more exclusive. In a majority of cases, they were organized into close-knit guilds, with apprenticeship systems and often a series of ranks of skill within them. Persons very often came into a guild because they belonged to a guildsman's family, but there were other means of access. Among the Sisala of Northern Ghana, it is believed that a young man can become inhabited by a spirit associated with a particular craft and he must then follow that vocation.[15] Apprenticeship could be rigorous; Nadel noted that in Nupeland, apprenticeship for traditional medicine took five years, and the "trade secrets" included no magical elements; they related purely to craft technique.[16]

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In this brief and inevitably sweeping survey, I have sometimes used the past and sometimes the present tense. This has been to indicate that the ideas, methods, and institutions mentioned are rooted in the past and have persisted into modern times. Newer and very significant adult educational forms have also emerged or been imported, and the educational institutions of Christianity are in many places now indigenized and in themselves traditional. But I have emphasized the pre-Christian, pre-colonial manifestations because they are often ignored and bypassed. And yet they can be used where they still flourish, for new purposes as well as the old ones. It has been demonstrated, for instance, that the benefits of modern midwifery can be passed on to many women who have never been to school, through the women's cults in Sierra Leone.[17] Thus, studying such adult educational forms is not just an antiquarian pursuit, an idle and harmless pastime. It can lead to practical and imaginative adaptations of strongly-rooted institutions and, one would hope, to their integration with some of the newer forms and institutions which are also contributing to the betterment of lives by the spread of knowledge, skills, and ideas.

III

ADULT EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

I have stressed that in earlier times in Africa, adult education had defined and recognizable social purposes. It is my firm conviction that in the world of today, adult education must also be seen as an instrument for affecting society. It can be used for conservation or for change; and in developing countries it is not surprising that people should see it primarily as a force for change, for promoting one or another kind of development. Mr. John Mwanakatwe, at the time Secretary-General to the Government of Zambia, commented: "My own views on this subject are clear. Adult education is undoubtedly a dynamic factor for promoting all forms of development. Its effect on social and political change can be enormous."[18]

Nowadays, the rather crude economic-growth ideas made fashionable in the 60's by the World Bank are questioned, and African leaders don't necessarily expect or want salvation from an increased Gross National Product. But they do hope for various forms of development which will both benefit their citizens and strengthen their countries. They still think, naturally, in economic terms, but development plans pay a good deal of attention to the social underpinning and to education in particular.

It is perhaps ironic, however, that while the Western world is becoming influenced by the ideas of such thinkers as Illich and Freire, in African countries very great faith is staked on the expansion of the formal school system. African Education Ministers in conference in Addis Ababa in 1961[19] committed themselves to the notion of universal primary education by 1980; many countries have made quite heroic efforts with this goal in view and a wealthy nation like Nigeria will probably achieve it. It has to be admitted that with very few exceptions (Tanzania is the most notable), these efforts to expand child education have relegated some forms of adult education to the background, both in the minds of leaders and in the plans they sponsor; and the moneys spent on adult education are small compared to those set aside for the formal school system.[20]

At the same time, there *are* the exceptions. Tanzania declared 1970 as Adult Education Year, and has spent much money and effort on functional literacy (in conjunction with UNESCO) and on political education, health education, and agricultural education for adult citizens, making use of well-tried means such as small study-circles combined with more modern means such as the radio. As one of the country's Vice-Presidents has said, "We in Tanzania say we would rather be the nation which has the most extensive Adult Education system and public library system in Africa than the one which has the highest statistical Gross National Product."[21]

The currents of thought which predominate in Tanzania also influence other African countries. Persons charged with expanding the education system are faced with the problems caused by parental ignorance and even opposition to the school system and begin to see that if the cherished goal of universal primary education is to be achieved relatively painlessly, they need to call on parent education to supplement it. Many economic planners, too, have come to appreciate that educational investment in the school system takes a very long time to bring in returns, whereas expenditure on adult education can produce quick results; and also that their most elegant plans depend on the contribution of farmers and town workers who have the necessary skills and attitudes to carry them through. Arthur Lewis, the West Indian economist, commented long ago: "The quickest way to increase productivity in the less developed countries is to train the adults who are already on the job."[22]

Besides these social and economic considerations, there are political ones. In many African countries, serious inequalities persist in opportunity and privilege between different social groups, such as urban dwellers and villagers, or among different regional and ethnic groups, as in Nigeria. There, the majority of school-age children in some of the States of the Federation do get a formal school education and thus the chance of a job in the "modern sector," whereas in other States only about 11% of the eligible children have been finding their way into the formal school system at all. The political dangers are obvious; there are bound to be fears of one group dominating another, and consequent instability and disorder. Adult education provides a speedier means of closing the gap than the building of more primary schools.

Another political point is humanitarian. Men and women in developing countries have to adjust to colossal changes in means of communication, ways of production, style of life, and political organization. Unless one is a fascist, one must hold the view that they have the right to participate in the development process and not just be buffeted by it. Adaptation should not be passive, but conscious. As Paul Bertelsen put it, people should be helped to be the *subjects*, rather than the *objects* of change.[23] Some of us tried to work from this premise even in colonial days, thinking that it was not enough to be handed self-government, that ordinary people needed to be given the political, sociological, and economic knowledge to enable them to share in controlling their countries' destinies when independence came. The diffusion of such knowledge is still needed, otherwise the ordinary person lapses into apathy and helplessness.

Not long ago some of us had a chance to make out this kind of case on the value of adult education in development to a government contemplating a new development plan. The Nigerian Commissioner for Economic Development and Reconstruction came to talk to the annual meeting of the Nigerian National Council for Adult

Education in 1973 on the role of adult education in Nigeria's third National Development Plan, which was due to take off in 1975. He expressed his own view that adult education could serve the development process, but challenged Nigeria's adult educators to present a clarified vision of their role, and he asked the Council to set up a task force to prepare "a well-conceived programme for Adult Education and an adequate institutional framework to ensure a full and effective implementation of the plan."[24]

Those of us on the task force were fully conscious of the heavy responsibility placed on us, and we had a very short time to produce our plan (we presented it to the Commissioner within three months of being assigned the job). We were ten people (only two not Nigerian), from universities, State governments, and voluntary agencies. While I don't claim that our report moved mountains, I do think it has been of practical use.

The very exercise and the Commissioner's challenge caused us to organize our own thinking in more operational terms. We hope that our work may stimulate people in other developing countries to pursue similar approaches, since we learned from UNESCO that an attempt of this kind has never been made before to prepare a coherent program embracing all forms of adult education to fit into a development plan.

We worked from the kind of arguments I have just discussed about adult education's possible contribution to economic, social, and political development, and then tried to relate this more specifically to the main objectives of Nigeria's planners, as stated in the second Plan.[25] We followed by looking at the substance of an adult education program designed to satisfy the national objectives, discussed the basic means of implementing it, and also suggested an institutional framework. Additionally, we outlined the training and research needed, and the financial implications.

In looking at the *content* or *substance* of a national program we listed eleven main facets, from functional literacy to continuing education for professional development; and although none was very original in itself, I believe there was originality in the attempt to put the facts together as a package and to encourage governments to think of them all as a part of adult education. Until now, there has been a tendency in Nigeria to classify literacy and "school-related" subjects as part of adult education and to decide that such vital activities as agricultural extension are somehow something else. When we came to *means* and *institutions*, again the emphasis was on coherence. We stressed the need for coordination and leadership, for the Federal Ministry of Education to play an active role, and for the development of some central institutions.

Our report was widely distributed within government departments and seems to have been given very fair study and attention. It will be a while before we can assess its impact fully, since the new National Development Plan was only launched at Easter, and not all the details are yet available. But it is clear that our general approach has had its effect. The Plan includes an allocation of ₦1,000,000 (or approximately $1,300,000) for the Federal Government to establish a Centre for Adult Education Development. This in itself could be of crucial value in policy-making and in coordination. And, apart from the Plan, the Federal Ministry of Education has already set up a small section to handle adult education matters in general. It's also pleasing to know that, in part as a spin-off from the kind of work our report represents, the Federal Government has decided to give a respectable annual grant to the Nigerian National Council for Adult Education, a body which has up till now run entirely on voluntary subscriptions. These are encouraging indications that at least some of our signals have been received.

* * * * *

Before leaving the subject of adult education and development, there is one other point I should like to make. Among the elements in any adult education plan relating to development, literacy and numeracy must, I believe, have an important place. Literacy doesn't in itself cause development, but it does seem to be a concomitant of development; almost every country which has achieved a high standard of living for its citizens in recent times has had a high literacy rate. There are other effective means of communication beside the written word, but although we should use all the traditional means and also the modern media, we cannot do without reading and writing as cheap ways of storing knowledge and enabling it to be transmitted over both distance and time.

I have had to generalize very broadly about development, rather than talk about the various special groups in society and their special educational needs in developing countries; but let me end up by picking out one special group, to which I happen myself to belong, and express some thoughts on the educational problems of women.

IV

SOME THOUGHTS ON WOMEN'S EDUCATION

A person in a given condition would be rash to claim that he or she is automatically an expert on that condition. For instance, most of us here are native English speakers, but are not therefore all regarded as experts in English teaching, certainly not all as Chomskys. Similarly, the fact that I am a woman doesn't automatically

qualify me as an expert on women's education (though one of the problems of the subject is that everybody, male or female, from St. Paul to Germaine Greer, considers that he or she knows all about women, often with very slender reason).

It is therefore with some hesitation that I bring the subject up. But this is International Women's Year, and so it is not inappropriate. Moreover, one advantage of living in societies other than one's own comes from realizing quite dramatically that any particular form of social or personal relationships or of division of labor cannot be taken for granted. When, for instance, I hear European or American women declaiming that women all over the world must be got out of the kitchen and into productive work, I think of the millions of African women who spend their days hoeing in the fields, to whom such a declamation must be meaningless.

There is no denying that African women do share with women in most other parts of the world a lack of access to education in relation to men and a particular deficiency of access to Western-type education at all levels. But before discussing their educational disadvantage, it is necessary to make clear that they are not necessarily disadvantaged in all other ways. Contrary to many stereotypes, African women often play crucial economic and political roles and sometimes benefit from privileges not familiar to people in New York or London.

One cannot of course over-generalize, so I would like to give a few examples from specific societies. In the Hausa and similar communities of Northern Nigeria, the prevailing religion is Islam and quite a number of women are at least partially secluded (in purdah); but this does not prevent them from playing an active part in economic life. One of them, Baba of Karo, has told her life-story, published about 20 years ago in a fascinating book. She describes her life in her husband's household and mentions:

> "... we women also had our own granaries. At harvest time we would buy grain and put it by; at the end of the dry season when the [wandering cattlemen] came, we took out our grain and sold it to them and made money. Our husbands would buy the grain for us, we would give them our money and they would go to market and purchase it for us to store in our granaries."[26]

Such Hausa women may engage in trade in very many commodities with other women and also with their husbands; they may lend money to their husbands, and they are often members of rotating credit societies, to which each pays a regular contribution and from which each in turn draws out the pool.[27]

Other sorts of trade engage women along the West African coast, particularly

among the Yorubas and the Akan; and the huge markets are dominated by women, giving them significant economic independence. In such societies it is so well accepted that a woman has an independent economic existence that when the first women with Western education appeared to join the civil service it was at once taken for granted that they would receive the same salary scales as their male counterparts (the first example is 80 years ago in Ghana, at a time when no such thing prevailed in Britain!).[28]

Political examples could be given, too, of the role of women as king-makers, the power of women's organizations in village politics, and the carry-over into post-independence times when women might control whole elections.[29] The point simply is: African women may enjoy a different set of advantages from those enjoyed by their Western counterparts, but they are not necessarily to be regarded as helpless or down-trodden.

They do, however, have educational problems. There is less enthusiasm for sending girls to school than boys, and fewer places are set aside for girls at post-primary and post-secondary institutions. Adult women may encounter prejudice from their husbands if they wish to go out to evening classes (and of course if they are in seclusion it is very difficult for them to participate in any class).

I have no easy answers to such problems, but would like to express one or two thoughts.

First, when governments or voluntary agencies are devising adult educational programs for agricultural or commercial improvement, they must make some effort to involve women.[30] When African women do so much of the agricultural work, particularly the production of food, it is anomalous that agricultural extension services are run by men for men. It happens partly because agricultural extension is often preoccupied with export crops, which are men's business, but partly through some sort of culture-bound myopia dating from colonial times.

What applies almost everywhere in Africa to agriculture applies in some African countries to commerce. Women dominate trade, but all the imported institutions for teaching business, whether University schools of business or independent institutes of management and the like, are masculine organizations. Somehow, forms of business extension must be devised to reach the woman trader in the market, and some of the big women traders could buy and sell your dapper European-suited male management consultant several times over. In fact, I know one West-African management trainer with a doctorate from a celebrated American institution whose own wife trades in foodstuffs on a very large scale, but I've never yet seen him giving her any hints on business!

Perhaps the reason for the lack of attempts at economic education for women is because agricultural and commercial extension work is carried on as ancillary to the Western-type educational system, and so many women are still illiterate. For this and other reasons, it is essential that every effort must be made to make more women in Africa literate. Modern media can help with some of the difficulties. In North Africa, interesting literacy campaigns have been carried on through television; sets are sold cheaply and there are also public viewing centers including some especially for women.[31] Such methods at least deserve success.

Another reason for difficulty in involving African women in adult education in general seems to me that they are heavily preoccupied with work and with family and social obligations. The under-occupied middle-class housewife who is an obvious client for adult education in Western Europe and America simply does not exist in Africa. If African women are to be involved in adult education, particularly in literacy, what they are learning must be seen as sufficiently valuable for their lives to encourage them to sacrifice time to continue learning. Here we come to the prevailing ideas of "functional" literacy.

Of course all literacy teaching is functional in the sense that it has a purpose; no one teaches another to read for ritualistic reasons only. But it can be made more closely related to work or to social obligation; and I would definitely like to see more functional literacy primers geared to such matters as market trading, credit societies, child health, gardening, or organizing a household. I am sure that a serious campaign along these lines could raise the level of literacy among African women quite noticeably.

Finally, in regard to women's education we come back to my earlier comments on traditional methods and institutions in adult education. Very many African women are still closely bound into traditional society. They cannot read, they cannot speak an international language; they are involved in economic activities handed down from the past, in ways handed down from the past. Obviously any adult educator who hopes to help them must somehow use the traditional mechanisms in the manner that I have earlier mentioned was done by Sir Milton Margai in Sierra Leone.

V

CONCLUSION

All my three themes this evening – tradition, development, the future status of women – are obviously interrelated. I have tried to treat them all in regard to the needs of a healthy society. There are two last points I would now like to make about adult educational programs for African development.

National development proceeds not only from the economy and the promotion of productive and service skills. As early African societies have taught us, they depended on cultural cohesion; and I suggest that adult education programs for the development of modern African nations need a cultural component. Societies still have to be cemented together by some sense of common heritage; and it is no accident that very many nations are spending heavily on a World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture (the second of its kind, but on a much enhanced scale), to be held in Nigeria later this year.[32] The lesson for us is that the encouragement of confidence and creativity, among both men and women, is an essential part of education for nation-building, and adult education must include cultural programs too.

Development is the achievement of men and women. Let us finally remind ourselves that it is for the benefit of those same men and women.[33] This may seem obvious, but economic planners are still sometimes in danger of looking at development as a sort of exercise in pyramid-building, arriving at massive efforts which impress others but bring no benefit to those individuals in society who have to make the efforts. *Adult education is an assertion of the people's claim to benefit.* It is an instrument for changing society, but only through enabling individuals to change and to develop. From this viewpoint, adult education is of the first importance to the men and women of what is sometimes called the Third World.

The poet Matthew Arnold wrote: "Not a having and a resting, but a growing and a becoming is the character of perfection as culture conceives it."[34] African countries, just as the rest of the world, may be a long way from perfection, but at least they are searching for improvement with seriousness and dedication. Improvement, as well as perfection, requires a growing and a becoming. Neither allows for the having and resting which will lead to rusty persons and a rusty and decadent community. Adult education should aid the becoming and keep away the rust from individual citizens and community alike.

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   He was Secretary to the Oxford University Delegacy for Extra-Mural Studies in the period after the Second World War, and played the leading role in starting university adult education programs in English-speaking Africa. Later, he was Director of the University of Ghana Institute of African Studies.

2. David Kimble was first Director of the Department of Extra-Mural Studies, University College of the Gold Coast (subsequently University of Ghana) and is now Professor of Political Science at the University of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland. K.A.B. Jones-Quartey was the same department's first Deputy Director. He retired as Director of the Institute of Adult Education, University of Ghana, in 1974.
   Cherry Gertzel and Leuan Hughes were both Resident Tutors in the extra-mural department of Makerere College (now Makerere University) in the late 1950's; the former is now Research Professor of Political Science at the University of Zambia, and the latter is Warden of Coleg Harlech (the Welsh national adult college).
   Ayo Ogunsheye was the Director of Extra-Mural Studies at the University of Ibadan, and Akande Tughiyele was a Resident Tutor there; Prof. Ogunsheye is now Managing Director of Henry Stephens Ltd, and Prof. Tugbiyele is head of the Continuing Education Centre (and has been Deputy Vice-Chancellor) of the University of Lagos.

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    A brief outline is given in S.S. Ole Sankan, *The Maasai* (Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau, n.d.). Among the Masai proverbs he quotes are:

    One head does not contain all knowledge;
    You might get confused and then know the truth later;
    Life has seasons;
    A young man does not supersede his father in traditional things.

    A classic on the subject among other East African societies (Galla, Kipsigis and Kikuyu) is E.H.J. Prins, *East African Age – Class Systems* (Groningen: Wolters, 1953; repr. Westport, Conn., Negro Universities Press, 1970).

14. See, among others, John Omer-Cooper, *The Zulu Aftermath*, Ibadan History Series (London: Longman, 1966).

15. Bruce Grindal, *Growing Up in Two Worlds: Education and Transition among the Sisala of Northern Ghana* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston Inc., 1972), pp. 44 and 45.

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17. This was done by the late Sir Milton Margai, who used the widespread organization of the women's "Bundu" initiation societies among the Mende.

18. John Mwanakatwe, *Adult Education and Political and Social Change* (Lusaka: Neczam, 1970), for the Adult Education Association of Zambia.

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24. Quoted in Nigerian National Council for Adult Education, *Proposal for A National Adult Education Programme for Inclusion in the Third National Development Plan* (Lagos: NNCAE, 1973 cyclostyled; 1974 printed). The material in the next few paragraphs is derived from this document.

25. Federal Republic of Nigeria, *Second National Development Plan 1970-74*, (Lagos: Government Printer, 1970). P. 32 lists the five principal national objectives as "to establish Nigeria firmly as:

    i. A united, strong and self-reliant nation;
    ii. A great and dynamic economy;
    iii. A just and egalitarian society;
    iv. A land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens; and
    v. A free and democratic Society."

26. Mary Smith, ed., *Baba of Karo* (London: Faber, 1954), p. 119.

27. See various references in Polly Hill, *Rural Hausa* (Cambridge: University Press, 1972).

28. She was Elizabeth Ekem Ferguson, sister of the distinguished Ghanaian surveyor and explorer, George Ekem Ferguson.

29. There have of course been famous and powerful women rulers in Africa, such as Yaa Asantewa, Queen-mother of Ejisu (Ghana) at the end of the nineteenth century, who led the last major Ashanti resistance against the British in 1900. She is celebrated in a poem by the late Dr. R.G. Armattoe, published in his collection *Deep Down the Blackman's Mind* (Devon: Stockwell, 1954); it carries the refrain:

"She was a man among men."

30. This point of view has been expressed by the Women's Programme Section of the UN Economic Commission for Africa. See, for example, their paper WP6/ED/33: *Out-of-school Education for Women in African Countries*, prepared for the fourth conference of the African Adult Education Association, Addis Ababa, 1973.

31. See a number of articles and reports published by UNESCO on television literacy schemes in Algeria and Tunisia, e.g. El Arbi Tahar, "Literacy in Tunisia. Educational Radio and Television for Adults," in *Literacy Discussion*, Teheran, International Institute for Literacy Methods, II, 1 (Winter 1971).

32. Scheduled to take place in Lagos, Nigeria, from November 22nd – December 21st, 1975.

33. President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia has written an eloquent reminder of this in his pamphlet, *Humanism in Zambia* (Lusaka: Government Printer, 1967). A telling passage is:

> "This high valuation of MAN and respect for human dignity, which is a legacy of our tradition, should not be lost in the new Africa. However 'modern' and 'advanced' in a Western sense this young nation of Zambia may become, we are fiercely determined that this humanism will not be obscured. African society has always been man-centered. Indeed this is as it should be, otherwise why is a house built? Not to give man shelter and security? Why make a chair at all? Why build a factory? Why do you want a State ranch? For what else would there be

need to grow food? Why is the fishing industry there? We can go on asking these questions. The simple and yet difficult answer is "MAN", simple in the sense that it is clear all human activity centres around MAN. Difficult too, because man has not yet understood his own importance. And yet we can say with justification and without any sense of false pride that the African way of life with its many problems has less set-backs towards the achievement of an ideal society. We in Zambia intend to do everything in our power to keep our society man-centered. For it is in this that what might be described as African civilisation is embodied and indeed if modern Africa has anything to contribute to this troubled world, it is in this direction that it should."

34. Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy* (London: 1869).